US Army Corps of Engineers
New Orleans District

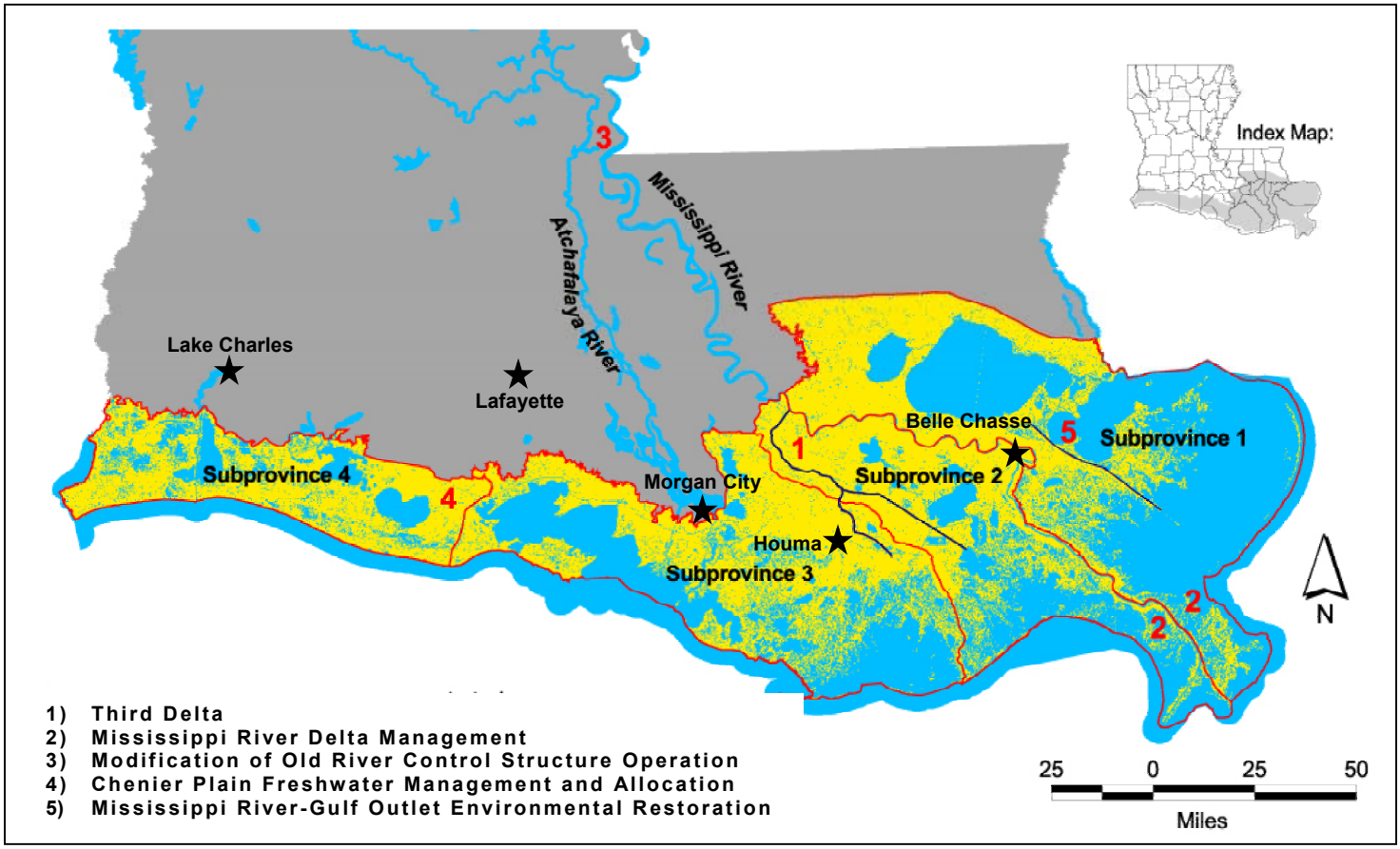
Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA)
NEAR-TERM ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PLAN

LARGE SCALE STUDIES

Vol. 1, Issue 2 **FACT SHEET** **April 2004**

Perspective

During Near-term Ecosystem Restoration Plan Formulation, the Coastal Restoration Team identified several candidate larger-scale features for potential incorporation into the Plan. Individually or in combinations these larger-scale features appear to exhibit the potential to significantly contribute to achieving restoration objectives in the subprovince within which they would be located, or adjacent subprovince(s), or substantial portions of Louisiana's coastal ecosystem. Accordingly, the corresponding benefits and costs for these potential Plan features must be further analyzed and confirmed to determine how best to incorporate them, if at all, with other Plan features.



Large-Scale Studies

Chenier Plain Freshwater Management and Allocation Reassessment

The urgency of coastal restoration will lend a fresh perspective to freshwater management and allocations in Subprovince 4, and the tradeoffs that would arise to accommodate coastal restoration needs and still support agriculture and navigation.

Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MRGO) Environmental Restoration

Significant wetlands losses and habitat changes in a portion of Subprovince 1 have resulted from the construction and operation of the MRGO. An ongoing General Investigation study (scheduled completion - FY04) is reevaluating the current operational and

authorization status of the MRGO. Those study results will dictate which LCA-compatible ecosystem restoration measures (eg, marsh creation, shoreline protection, river diversions) may be evaluated in a follow-on study focused on MRGO-related habitat losses and ecological changes.

Mississippi River Delta Management

Focus is to identify implementable alternatives that can make maximal use of sediments, nutrients and fresh water at and throughout the Mississippi River's Gulf delta and vicinity. The goal is to achieve a reduction in the factors contributing to Gulf hypoxia while maintaining navigation. The Barataria Basin (Subprovince 2) and the lower Mississippi River and Breton Sound (portions of Subprovince 1) would be the locations benefited.

Third Delta

Focus is to identify an implementable diversion of Mississippi River water, or other sources of freshwater, sediments and nutrients, into portions of both the Barataria and Terrebonne Subbasins (Subprovinces 2 and 3, respectively) sufficient to achieve responses that mimic historic ecological outputs without jeopardizing existing and future infrastructure.

Modification of Old River Control Structure (ORCS)

The delivery of more Atchafalaya River sediments to Atchafalaya Bay and associated shallow waters has emerged as a very appealing way to enhance and sustain a substantial portion of coastal Subprovince 3. Amendments to the ORCS's operation plan will be evaluated to achieve that goal. Considerations will include the comparative costs and benefits of adjusting flow and sediment distributions on maintaining flood control, navigation and environmental features along the Atchafalaya, Red and Mississippi Rivers.